(c) if so, the details thereof and what action Government have taken against the suppliers and concerned officials for accepting these spurious and outdated medicines; and

(d) what steps are being taken to stop repetition of this practice in this hospital as well as other hospitals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI): (a) and (b) No spurious and outdated medicine has been administered to any patients in the Safdarjung Hospital. However, fungus like material was detected in a deformed bottle of Sodium Chloride and Dextrose Injection on 11.10.1996.

(c) and (d) A Committee has been set up in Directorate General of Health Services to enquire into the purchase procedure; storage and supply systems, observance of precautions in the use of IV Fluids in the hospitals and to suggest remedial measures to prevent recurrence of such incidents in future.

Survey in Andhra Pradesh to Identify districts Facing Iodine Deficiency Problems

*175. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any survey has been conducted in Andhra Pradesh to identify the districts facing iodine deficiency disorder problems;

(b) whether any action was initiated/ proposed to control iodine deficiency disorder related problems in Andhra Pradesh;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, whether it will be done to identify the problematic districts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI): (a) Yes Sir. All the seven districts surveyed in the State have shown high prevalence of Iodine Deficiency Disorders.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) The National Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control Programme is being implemented in Andhra Pradesh. The programme includes IDD surveys, supply of iodated salt in place of common salt, health education to increase public awareness etc. The State Government has issued ban on the sale of non-iodised salt in 7 districts of the State Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control Cell has been established in the State Health Directorate. The State Government has been advised to extend the ban notification to the entire State.

Non-Cashing of Cheques of Cooperative Institutions

*176. SHRI S.B. CHAVAN:
DR. SHRIKANT RAM
CHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that in the recent past several thousand cheques drawn on banks by cooperative institutions cannot be cashed for want of cash;

(b) whether several persons including M.Ps have complained to the RBI about this;

(c) what is the reason for this kind of situation; and

(d) what remedial measures Government are contemplating and in what time?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have reported that they are not aware that several thousand cheques drawn on banks by cooperative institutions could not be encashed for want of cash.

(b) According to RBI, some

Members of Parliament had requested RBI to rush funds to currency chests in Vidarbha and Marathwada regions.

(c) The last harvesting season witnessed bumper crops of sugarcane and cotton in Marathwada and Vidarbha regions. The Government of Maharashtra also increased the purchase prices for sugarcane and cotton. These two developments resulted in temporary increase in the demand for cash from the District Central Cooperative Banks which maintain accounts with the Currency Chests of public sector banks in the region. The Reserve Bank which replenishes the funds in the currency chests did not also receive any advance intimation about the temporary demand for funds.

(d) RBI have advised their Nagpur Office to make arrangements to meet the seasonal demand for funds to currency chests located in Vidarbha/Marathwada regions. RBI Nagpur is also arranging to send funds from surplus chests to deficit ones.

Granting more powers to SEBI to Improve its Functioning

*177. SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has sought more powers to perform its functions better;

(b) if so, what action has been taken by Government to grant more powers to SEBI;

(c) whether it is also a fact that if more powers are granted to SEBI, it can regulate the stock markets in a better way; and

(d) whether it is also a fact that in the countries like the United State of America, institutions like SEBI are empowered with more powers?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) SEBI's powers have been substantially strengthend through the Securities Laws (Amendment) Act, 199S. The additional powers, inter alia, relate to imposing monetary penalties for violations committed by market intermediaries, issuing directions to companies in matters relating to issue of capital and transfer of securities and regulating the working of new market intermediaries such as depositories, foreign institutional investores, credit rating agencies, venture capital funds and collective investment schemes in addition to the existing ones.

Strengthening of SEBI is periodically reviewed and necessary steps taken, if felt necessary.

(d) The structure and functioning of capital markets differ between countries and rules and regulations evolve according to the specific market needs. Therefore, comparing powers of regulators in markets having different characteristics may not be appropriate.

Revision of Criteria for Appointment of Members of Central Board of Film Certification

*178. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM:
SHRI IQBAL SINGH:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that most of the